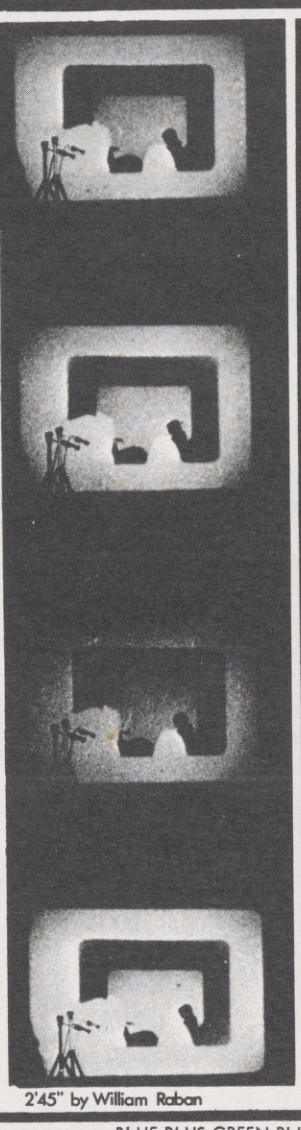
CANYON

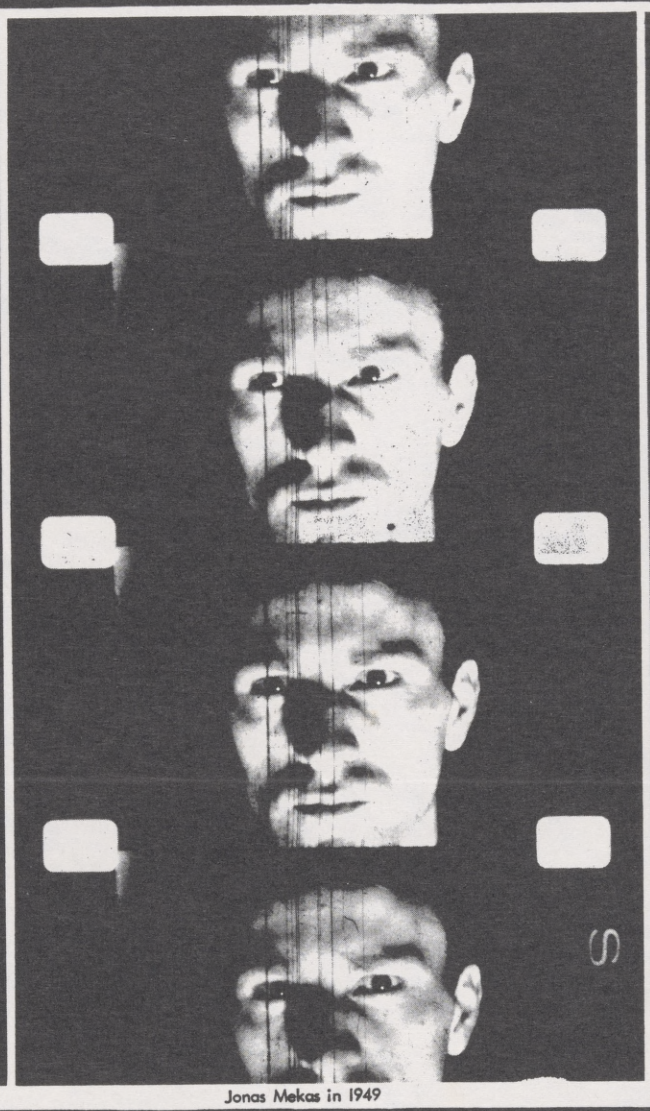
The oldest regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde films

Shows (unless otherwise noted) on Thursdays 8:30 PM at the San Francisco Art Institute, 800 Chestnut St., S.F. Admission $1.75. Free coffee. For information call 332-1514. '76

Rudy Burckhardt on Machu Picchu, Peru (drawing by Red Grooms)



2'45" by William Raban



Jonas Mekas in 1949

SHEEPMAN & THE SHEARED by Mike Leggett

OCTOBER 7: MIKE LEGGETT'S "SHEEPMAN & THE SHEARED"

WITH MIKE LEGGETT IN PERSON

Mike Leggett is an extremely articulate Englishman who also happens to make beautiful films. On this evening's program we will present his recently completed feature length film commenced in 1970 and completed in 1975. SHEEPMAN & THE SHEARED is approximately two hours in length and its seven parts are titled in their order: SHEEP, SHEEPMAN, WINDOW, LANE, FARM, BLUE PLUS GREEN PLUS RED, and SHEEPWOMAN.

"The film takes Landscape as Object in front of the film-maker and the medium; it is not about rural life or the mythology of The Land, neither does it seek to present a personalised impression visual or otherwise of the state of residing in a rural district of the South West of England. The coincidence of flora, fauna and man-made object, processes and activities, with the film frame are in no way paramount to an inspection of the total film process by which an observation of this kind is made possible—specific conditions to do with both Nature and men's activity with Nature are recorded with camera but is essentially a relationship of coincidence; predetermined approach largely governs the camera's function though its operation at the time is subject to the observation and reaction of its operator.

"What is subsequently examined is the precise activity of assembly of the camera rolls; assembly such as in WINDOW almost entirely dictated by the length of time the camera ran on each occasion or in FARM which takes into account the pre-determined sub-assembly systems within each of the rolls before arriving at any final roll order, a decision more determined by a process of inspection and adjustment over a period of time." — M.L.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 14 & FRIDAY OCTOBER 15: RUDY BURCKHARDT RETROSPECTIVE!

WITH RUDY BURCKHARDT IN PERSON

WEST COAST PREMIERES

Rudy Burckhardt is a New York painter, photographer and graphic artist who has been making films for the last thirty-five years. For some strange reason his films have eluded the mainstream of the American avant garde. That is perhaps due (in part) to their narrative content. His films are nonetheless unique in terms of their visual expression and sense of humor. At the recent Canyon Cinema Tenth Anniversary Show his film LURK was one of the best received.

A young filmmaker meeting artist Alex Katz on the street asked him, "Why isn't Rudy Burckhardt more famous?" "Because they could never put a handle on him," Alex said. Alex wrote the first article about Burckhardt thirteen years ago for Artnews. He begins, "The city, its people and its urban thought, in a larger sense, is the subject matter that runs through Rudolph Burckhardt's many art forms—painting, photography, collage, filmmaking, drawing, writing, etc." Later, speaking of a New York documentary (BROOKLYN BRIDGE) Katz lists its specific subject matter and adds, "The film records these things as physical facts. They are interesting and beautiful and mysterious because they exist. There is no attempt to explain what they mean, or what they symbolize, or to distort them for the sake of 'exciting photography'. They are social documentaries that do not force a point....His attitude reminds me of Beckett in that his subject matter, mostly the city , which is dismal even by artists' standards, in his art become uplifting for no apparent reason other than its being....If Corot had lived in Dostoevsky's neighborhood, would his work look like Burckhardt's?...It's not easy to come by what makes Burckhardt's work so distinct. Maybe, it's the cultured tradition of the cool slow Swiss light placed in a downtown world."

This retrospective is in collaboration with the Pacific Film Archive which will feature his collaborations with Joseph Cornell (extremely rare treats) on Tuesday October 12. (Check the Filmcalender for titles.)

THURSDAY OCT. 14 PROGRAM:

MONTGOMERY ALA. (1941)
DEFAULT AVERTED (1975)(New York City)
CATERPILLAR (Maine)
CITY PASTURE
SODOM AND GOMORRHA—NEW YORK 10036
SERROCHE

FRIDAY OCT. 15 PROGRAM:

COME TO THE QUISQUEYA (1976) Travelogue filmed in Peru
UNDER THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE (1954)
"There are sequences—the children swimming under the Brooklyn Bridge is one—which belong to the best footage on New York by anybody."
—Jonas Mekas, Village Voice

TARZAM (1968)
With Taylor Meade as Tarzam, and Neil Welliver
THE CASSEROLE DISH (1976)
Written and directed by Phillip Lopate
BOTTLE OF THE BULGE (1975)
In collaboration with Thomas Burckhardt (age 11)

OCTOBER 21: THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF JONAS MEKAS' "LOST LOST LOST" (reels #1-6 of "DIARIES, NOTES, AND SKETCHES")

SPECIAL PRICE $2.50

(2 hrs. 30 min.) 1976

Jonas Mekas could most likely be credited with the invention of the film diary and he is the only filmmaker we know of who has worked consistently within this form. His diaries have a wonderful personal vision, and they include an enormous amount of the history of the milieu of New York art and literature in which he has been a major force for over twenty years.

"These six reels (2 h. 30 min.) of DIARIES, NOTES, AND SKETCHES come from the years 1949-1963. They begin with my arrival in New York in November 1949. The first and second reels deal with my life as a Young Poet & a Displaced Person in Brooklyn. It shows the Lithuanian immigrant community, their attempts to adapt themselves to a new land and their tragic efforts to regain independence for their native country. It shows my own frustrations and anxieties and the decision to leave Brooklyn and move to Manhattan. Reel three and reel four deal with my life in Manhattan, on Orchard Street and 13th Street. First contacts with the New York poetry and film-making communities. Robert Frank shooting The Sin Of Jesus. Le Roy Jones, Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara reading at the Living Theater. Documentation of the political protests of the late fifties and early sixties. First World Strike for Peace. Vigil in Times Square. Women for Peace. Air Raid protests. Reel five includes Rabit Shit Haikus, a series of haikus filmed in Vermont; scenes at the early Film-Makers' Cooperative; shooting of Hallelujah the Hills; scenes of New York City. Reel six contains a trip to Flaherty Seminar, a visit to the seashore in Stony Brook; a portait of Tiny Tim; opening of Twice a Man; excursions to the countryside seen from two different views: that of my own and that of Ken Jacobs whose footage in incorporated into this reel.

"The period I am dealing with in these six reels was a period of desperation, of attempts to desperately grow roots into the new ground, to create new memories. In these six painful reels I tried to indicate how it feels to be in exile, how I felt in those years. These reels carry the subtitle LOST LOST LOST, the title of a film myself and my brother wanted to make in 1949, and it indicates the mood we were in, in those years. It describes the mood of a Displaced Person who hasn't yet forgotten his native country but hasn't yet gained a new one. The sixth reel is a transitional reel where we begin to see some relaxation, where I begin to find moments of happiness. New life begins. What happens later, you'll have to see the next installment of reels..."

Jonas Mekas, 3/31/76

OCTOBER 29: TWO BRITISH STRUCTURALISTS MARILYN HALFORD & WILLIAM RABAN IN PERSON

SPECIAL TIME 7:30

ADMISSION: 1 SHOW $1.75; BOTH SHOWS $2.50

Since P. Adams Sitney first used the term "structuralism" in an article in a 1969 issue of Film Culture, the tendency in this country has been for filmmakers to avoid the appelation "structuralist". Our European counterpoints, however, feel quite comfortable with the term, and—especially in England—structuralism has evolved into quite a viable art movement with a great flurry of theory and practice. Peter Gidal in a recent article has stated the case clearly regarding British structuralism:

"Structural Film has some (perhaps unconscious) roots in the avant-garde of the 1920's (Vertov, Eisenstein, Moholy-Nagy, Leger, Klee, Joyce). Although the movement has established itself over the last decade, its function and position in the history of art and in the history of film have so far been under-estimated. It is, in my opinion, the most important and advanced filmwork now being produced. It is also dealing brilliantly with certain visual, spatial and temporal problems previously held to be the domain of painting and sculpture (and indeed many of its practitioners have come from these fields). It is a film movement whose non-narrative concerns make it not readily amenable to psychological literary interpretation. Such film work needs, and forces in many cases, an active viewer. At its most rigorous, Stuctural Film attempts to be non-illusionist. The process of the film's making deals with devices that result in the demystification of that film process. But by 'deals with' I do not mean that each film represents some aspect of the film process. A film defined by its development towards increasing materialism does not represent, or document, anything. The film produces certain relations between segments, between what the camera is aimed at and the way the image is produced and presented. The dialectic of the film is established in that space of tension between material flatness, grain, light, movement (two dimensionality) and the supposed real reality that is represented (three dimensionality; figurativeness). The attempted destruction of illusion is a constant necessity. In Structural Film the relations of the structure of the film itself are primary (rather than the representational content). The structuring aspects and the attempt to decipher the structure and anticipate/recorrect it, to clarify and analyze the 'given', at each moment, is the root concern of such filmmaking. And this process is neither 'purely visual' nor 'purely intellectual'."

7:30 SHOW—MARILYN HALFORD

Assisted by William Raban she will present a unique combination of dance, mime, theater and projected images in single and multi-screen as well as short "straight" films.

"All the films I am showing tonight deal in colour with simple images. My interest in content increases and in all three films the desire was to represent a chosen subject by making a film of it. The material is a result of the subject matter.

"Again the potential theatricality of film, its property of carrying out limited information, interests me. These three films are to be the beginning of my film SKETCHES."

YING TANG

"Ying Tang sees a Chinese comic book, is filmed from over my shoulder. The props are my Chinese dressing gown and a wicker laundry basket, serving as a background. The soundtrack adds to the film with singing 'Ying tang....' Disparate elements join together to make simple chinoiserie."

COBAEA SCANDENS

"Shot late last summer when our East End yard was enclosed with a climber. The day was warm, finely wet and very still except for a few bumble bees flying in and out of purple trumpets. Through the dense air I pulled focus, trying to locate flowers that trembled in the stillness, laden with a bee."

IN FLIGHT

"A compilation of images from the sky. A weather cock, some house martins, a galleon, a flock of pigeons and an aeroplane all fly about the frame in their own way." —M.H.

9:30 SHOW—WILLIAM RABAN

British filmmaker William Raban is sometimes considered the most accessible of structuralists because of his choice of landscapes as subject. This means that audiences may be able to experience his work with something less difficulty than they might with more "abstract" structuralists. This program includes:

AT ONE (1974)
MOONSHINE (1975)(2 screen)
SOFT EDGE (1973)
TAKE MEASURE
ANGLES OF INCIDENCE (1973)(2 screen)

"The film frame is modified by filming the view seen through a window. The window shape changes as the camera moves to viewpoints on an arc the centre of which is the catch on the middle of the window frame. Short bursts of film are shot from these positions with the window centre always keeping to the middle of screen. The window plane works like a mirror: as the camera rotates on its axis, new positions established on one side of the arc are complimented by balancing points on the opposite sector, and like the first law of mirrors: angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection."—W.R.

2'45"

"It starts with nothing more than the audience, the empty projection screen and the filmmaker announcing the title, date and place of the event. The blank screen is filmed and projected as a black and white negative at the next performance. This film and the audience watching it are refilmed, and so the film develops in complexity with each subsequent stage of reprojection and refilming. When it is performed, the film always stays the same length—two minutes and 45 seconds. The film is in a perpetual state of development since each daily stage becomes redundant once it has been projected and refilmed. The film encapsulates the sum of its past screenings, its past generations become screens receding within screens in alterating layers of positive and negative."

—W.R.

SURFACE TENSION (1974)(2 screen)

"An emphatically black and white two-screen film of jabbing angles and drifting parallelograms (the image of light in the projector-gate I suspect), that can be read as either flat or receding in depth—the two screens together presenting a constructivist play of abstract forms in space."

—Malcolm Le Grice, Studio International

To receive our posters in the mail, send your name, address and zip code to: Cinematheque Mailing List/Canyon Co-op Office/Industrial Center Building, Room 220/Sausalito, CA 94965.

CINEMATHEQUE

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